



DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT OFFICE
FIFTH FLOOR ONE GOVERNMENT PLAZA
ROCKY MOUNT, NC 27802-1180
PHONE 252-972-1267 FAX 252-972-1173
E-MAIL edmistenk@ci.rocky-mount.nc.us

Downtown News

March/April 2000

Volume I-Issue 2

In the Spotlight

Feature building for this issue is the Rocky Mount Train Station. Originally constructed in 1903 with expansions in 1911-12 and 1916-17, the station is currently undergoing restoration. When completed, the station will be occupied by the Amtrak station, the Rocky Mount Chamber of Commerce, and the Nash County Travel and Tourism office.

Thanks for Your Help!

- We appreciate the response to our request for old photos of downtown. We will share some of the wonderful pictures in future issues.
- Area real estate offices have been very helpful in updating the listings of properties available for lease or purchase in Downtown Rocky Mount. Beginning with the next issue, we will list some of the available properties in downtown.



Bright Idea for this issue:

Wouldn't it be great to have a round-trip train ride to Raleigh during the NC State Fair for those of us who don't want to fight I-440 traffic? If there is enough interest, we can work on a sponsorship proposal. Let us know your ideas on this and other events by calling the Downtown Development Office at 972-1267.

Tenants Lining Up for Renovated Train Station

After two and half years of work, the restoration of the Rocky Mount Train Station is expected to be complete by early summer. Among the improvements to the turn of the century building are the restoration of the slate roof and decorative finials of the building. Brackets, eaves, and window trim have been painted to match as closely as possible the original colors used at the station.

The interior of the building features a two story atrium with a large skylight. The AMTRAK passenger lobby features beautiful architectural details such as a ceramic tile floor with a mosaic design and deeply stained woodwork.

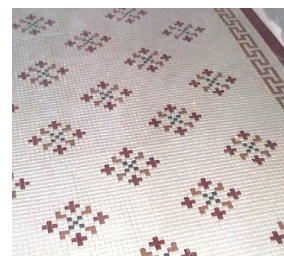
AMTRAK will use the first floor as a rail passenger terminal with ticket and baggage handling offices. The second floor of the station has been restored with plaster and bead board wood finishes. The Rocky Mount Area Chamber of Commerce will occupy the second floor.

Prime space is available for lease on the third floor. Gracefully arched windows flood the space with an abundance of natural light. Wooden floors, wide moldings, and finely detailed trim, make this space among some of the most desirable office/professional space in Rocky Mount. For information on available space in the station, contact the Downtown Development office at 972-1267.

Plans for landscaping the area around the station include providing a well-lit area for convenient parking and a grassy open commons area.

The Rocky Mount Train Station restoration project will contribute to the revitalization of downtown in three important ways:

- ◆ Accomplish redevelopment of the southern end of the central business district
- ◆ Make rail passenger service more attractive as a mode of transportation
- ◆ Preserve a major architectural feature of the City's history as a thriving railroad center



Detail of mosaic tile in restored train station

Stand Up and Be Counted
Be sure to return your Census 2000 Form!

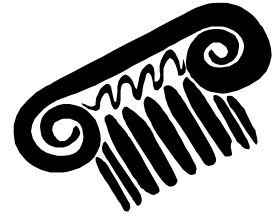
Preservation Rocky Mount Holds Annual Meeting

Preservation Rocky Mount held its annual meeting at the Rocky Mount Mills on Thursday, March 2. Officers elected for the coming year include Jean Bailey, President; John Daniel, Vice President; Secretary, Elizabeth Early Scott, and David Chicelli, Treasurer. Board members are Raymond Gantt, Vel Johnson, Peggy Perry, Sam Taylor, Duane Williams, Laura Boice, Peggy Goode, Lin Papich, T.E. Ricks, Polly Warner, and Chancey Hill. Members voted to make a \$1000 contribution to the restoration of the wooden horses for the Sunset Avenue Carousel.

John Mebane made an informative presentation to the group of the history of the Rocky Mount Mills properties. Photographs were available of restorations of mill housing in Edenton, NC.

Preservation Rocky Mount has begun a resource center for building materials rescued from the demolition of older buildings. Members had an opportunity to see examples of the types of materials that will be available for property owners who are restoring older buildings.

The next quarterly meeting of Preservation Rocky Mount will be in June at a location that has historic significance to the community. For membership information about Preservation Rocky Mount contact Jean Bailey at 446-1422.



Did You Know..

That over one-third of the commercial buildings in the central city area of Rocky Mount are on the National Register of Historic Places? As a result, many of these wonderful historic buildings are eligible for significant tax credits for restoration. Contact the Downtown Development Office at 972-1267 to learn more.

Organizing for Downtown Revitalization

When a community makes a commitment to revitalize its historic downtown, several steps are necessary to create a program that will be strong enough to do the long-term incremental work that will bring life and energy back to Main Street. Communities that meet the criteria can be designated National Main Street Communities. A checklist of the basic criteria and an evaluation of where Rocky Mount currently stands follows:

Criteria Achieved

- ✓ Widespread community support: *Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Renaissance, RMECDC, City of Rocky Mount, Carolinas Gateway Partnership are partners in revitalization efforts.*
- ✓ Historic preservation ethic: *Rocky Mount has four National Register Historic districts; an active Historic Preservation Commission, and Preservation Rocky Mount.*
- ✓ Adequate operating budget: *Initial funding has been provided by City of Rocky Mount*
- ✓ Paid professional program manager: *City of Rocky Mount has hired a full time Downtown Development Manager*
- ✓ Reports key statistics: *Downtown Development Manager is in process of creating databases to measure building occupancies, net jobs, net businesses, renovations, etc.*
- ✓ Member of the National Main Street Network and NC Main Street: *Rocky Mount has joined the National Main Street Network; city is listed as an inactive NC Main Street community.*

Criteria To Be Achieved

- ☐ Active board of directors and committees: *Downtown Development Office is assessing leadership possibilities for these roles.*
 - ☐ Training program for board and volunteers: *This to be determined when leadership is in place.*
 - ☐ Vision and mission statements relevant to community conditions: *These being developed.*
 - ☐ Comprehensive work plan based on Main Street Four Points © : *This is being developed.*
- Join the downtown team and help us to meet all of our criteria. Call 972-1267 for information.**

“Organization is the key to a successful downtown revitalization program. A strong, viable organization provides the stability necessary to build and maintain a long-term effort. Developing a management program that is well structured, well funded and committed to the future is the only way to make revitalization last.”
Main Street Guidelines, National Trust 1988

NEXT ISSUE: Is downtown Rocky Mount ready for business?